

Japan Christian Activity News

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The following is the partial text of the peace appeal passed by the NCCJ 29th General Assembly, March 26 & 27. The appeal related closely to the theme of the General Assembly, "Jesus Christ--Our Foundation for Peace and Unity." It calls on all member churches to be united in working for peace. The second part of the appeal will be carried in the May issue of JCAN

Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Human beings, created in God's image, continue to be destroyed by war, oppression, captivity, famine, and other forms of violence generated out of presently existing systems of ruthless international competition and inequality. We fully recognize the fact that we cause great suffering when we embrace a materialistic life style that is based on systems of oppression and structures of greed which are racing down a path toward catastrophic destruction. In this context we partake in the total nexus of oppression. Instead of living out our days burying our heads in the shifting sands of a superficial peace, we must come out into the light of day, understand thereby the reality of our situation, and confess our sins. It is urgent that we take action now as we witness to the Prince of Peace.

I. THREATS TO LIFE

It has been determined that over 90 million people have been killed in major wars over the last 2600 years. It has also been shown that of this number, 43 million have been killed in wars between the end of World War II and the year 1980. This means that about half of all the people killed in wars over the 2600 years of recorded human history have been killed in the last 40 years.

According to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, during the last ten years, over 500,000 people are known to have been murdered by military and other government-related or supported bodies. It can be seen that we are on a suicidal path that leaves us no choice but to pay urgent attention to the pervasive and all-encompassing degree to which militarism and militarization are at the root of the present world crisis.

II. FOUR ASPECTS OF MILITARIZATION

Justice sacrificed to the Arms Race

One of the major debates taking place in the body politic of Japan today is related to whether or not defense (military) spending should be allowed to go over 1 percent of the nation's Gross National Product (GNP). In this context, it must be remembered that even with a 1 percent ceiling on military spending, Japan maintains the highest military budget of all Asian and Oceanic nations with the exception of China. Military spending by the superpowers is only made possible through systems of domination and oppression which sacrifice the lives, health, and welfare of a majority of the world's population. As in many other rich and powerful nations, through the policies of the Nakasone government, Japan is sacrificing welfare expenditures for increases in the military budget. Major causes of

famine and poverty in Third World countries are to be found in the militarization of national governments. This is painfully apparent in many African nations where military budgets have increased by over 100 percent in the past 3 years, at the expense of human welfare and social justice.

Governmentally-induced violence

Governments continue to support military forces that oppress human movements seeking to create greater social justice. With the economic and military support of the so-called advanced nations, these governments continue to support and sustain systems of oppression and forced development which in no way are concerned with the interests of the people, but rather with confiscating land and destroying lives. In order to suppress the voices of the people, these violent governments perpetrate violence against their own citizens. The so-called advanced democratic nations of the world cannot be absolved of responsibility in the perpetration of these injustices.

The Idolatry of Militarization

Over 30 nations of the world retain military governments while many other countries are heading at great speed down this path as policies are enforced through violence and oppression. These governments, in no way interested in the plight of the masses of their people, continue to increase their powers in political and military areas. Not only do these nations place military personnel in all levels and sectors of society, military strategy is used in business, education, and thought control. The decision-making processes in governmental organizations are often continued in forms which suppress the rights of people within the context of crisis management. This orientation is also to be seen in advanced nations burdened with the weight of military governments. With the world divided into two camps, the threat of nuclear annihilation is used to justify the control of human life through military power. We are thus moulded and dominated by concepts of a

military mindset, robbing us of the freedom of will and spirit that is the human birthright.

Militarization of Social Arrangements

Militarization is sustained by privilege that would oppress all life to sustain power. In order to secure this system of oppression, continuous efforts are made to initiate and sustain military arrangements within society. Through this orientation, more and more nations of the world are coming to be unified in monolithic systems of control over the lives of people in which bureaucratic management is established and sustained for the sake of procuring military appropriations anytime necessary.

We must be fully aware of the fact that movements toward nationalization of the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine and the strengthening of the Emperor system with the attendant nationalist flags, anthems and rightist excesses, are all thrusts in the direction of the remilitarization of Japan.

Centralization of government, development of management technologies, information control, and like techniques preclude the necessity of resorting to violence to sustain control over the people in Japan. Through the development of intermediate organizations which are connected either directly or indirectly to the government, it is possible to control society, not through the violence of "hard" technologies, but through the more subtle violence of "soft" methods.

Through these skillful methods, the majority of people in Japanese society are not able to perceive the fact that they are being manipulated and restricted by a privileged minority. Yet minority groups are able to perceive this oppression as they are being marginalized in society since they are not useful to those in power within the military or management scheme of things. The fingerprinting required on the alien registration card is an example. This is another manifestation of a government policy aimed at controlling the lives of people. The

importance of this issue should be recognized by all people living in Japan.

III. TO BE PEACEMAKERS

We realize that the churches which find themselves within these contexts are to a degree without any real power. However, within this context of powerlessness, we believe in the resurrection of Christ who was killed on the cross, and yet was able to overcome death.

We understand the power of God in the words: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." (II Corinthians 5:19) Through the witness of churches in other parts of Asia, we are being called into participation in life's togetherness with all those who are our neighbours. We are called into solidarity with those who are the suffering branches of the body of Christ, carrying these sufferings of the oppressed of the world as we come to realize more and more what the church must become in this country where militarism and militarization are on the ascendancy. We repent that the churches in Japan have chosen to condone Japan's present high economic growth patterns when it is clear that these same patterns are sustained by sacrificing other peoples in Asia.

It is essential that we become a community of followers of Christ who are truly able to bring a genuine Gospel of reconciliation. This we must do through prayer, dialogue, and solidarity, as we witness to peace, justice and human rights.



Rev. C.C. Shang, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, was the special guest and speaker at the NCCJ General Assembly. An excerpt of his speech, delivered March 26, the first day of the NCCJ General Assembly, follows:

CHALLENGES FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN TAIWAN

Challenges from Without Political Challenges

Our church had its beginning in 1865 as part of the modern missionary movement. The focus of that beginning was on preaching and healing. The church was a deeply socially-oriented church, not only preaching but doing the Gospel. The early church took seriously that part of the Lord's prayer which says "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This was to them an integral part of their mission. The church stood side by side with the common people in their sufferings and in their hopes. While doing this, it went through several socio-political changes: the Ching dynasty, the Japanese colonization period and finally the rule of the Republic of China.

During the past 40 years, Taiwan has experienced many serious and difficult political situations. Taiwan became a sort of pawn in the hands of the super-powers. It suffered the loss of political recognition by world powers--Japan, the U.S.A., and many others. Under this situation, outside powers seemed to be interfering and deciding the future of the people of Taiwan. As a result, the Church spoke out through 3 statements: 1) Public Statement on Our National Fate, 2) Appeal from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, 3) Declaration on Human Rights. These statements firmly expressed our belief that 18 million people in Taiwan should be determine their own future. We stated that these issues arose out of our concern for our people, and that the concern came from our Christian faith, and was not politically motivated. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan supports democracy. Taiwan must become thoroughly democratized. Our church is not

against the regime or party, but it is concerned about "how to carry out the process of democracy."

Challenges from our ecumenical Relationships

While Dr. Kao [General Secretary of the PCT, imprisoned from April 1980 to August 1984] was in prison, the focus of many of our ecumenical partners was on the conditions of the prisoners, on Dr. Kao's release, etc. There was much emotional and prayer support for our Church. Now that he has been released on parole, the intensity of this concern is understandably less. Most of our partner churches have developed centres of interest in mainland China. Some have indicated that "as long as it (the church) exists, we will be your friend." Will we be able to continue to have a close identification with churches whose energies and focus will be directed on China?

Our Church is still a "receiving" church, with about 100 missionaries serving here from a wide spectrum of countries and churches. How long will we continue to be able to expect support from abroad in view of our "economic miracle?" Is our partnership relationship based on more than financial and personnel support?

Challenges from Within

Ten years ago, when "Our Appeal" was issued, divisions, internal disorder, and lack of unity were issues that faced a church going through stress and trial. Since that time, there has been healing and a greater sense of unity. Persecutions and outside pressures seemed to bring internal unity, a coming together. Church leaders learned to cope with uncertainties.

Yet relationships between our mountain churches, Hakka, and Taiwanese-speaking congregations are still a matter of concern. This past year, the first mountain pastor was elected as Deputy Secretary. Following tradition, he will be Moderator of the General Assembly in 3 years. This is one sign of renewal and new unity.

Challenges of the future

Future challenges lie in setting priorities for the church. Three areas of concern are theological education, evangelism, and contextualization.

Much is said today about "doing theology" --a theology that touches one's public and social life. Many of our Christians feel that faith is a private matter. But the Scripture emphasizes that it is a public matter, faith is "confessional," that it must communicate.

The very nature of our church will be revealed in the theological and evangelistic stance we take. This year we are observing the "year of Evangelism." We hope to reach one million members by the year 2000--thus every year should be a year of evangelism. We also wish to grow in ways that will touch the lives of all people in Taiwan. We have not yet dealt with the mandate to reach out to the "utmost parts of the world" in any concrete way. What should we be doing in this area in the future?



What does it mean to be a Christian in Taiwan? One scholar explains "contextualization" as that which seeks "to understand the specific context of each human group and person on its own terms. in all its dimensions--cultural, social, religious, political, economical--and to discern what the Gospel says to them in that context." We still have a ways to go in developing our own style of Christianity that is not heavily Western. We seek to make the Gospel culturally relevant without compromising the Lordship of Christ.

The history of the Church and this land we call Taiwan are intertwined. The first schools, press, and hospital were established by the PCT. The Church became a conscience and a constraining presence to excesses of ruling governments, whether they were Chinese or Japanese. Present day pressures on the Church provide an arena for Church-State dialogue and interaction. We seek to offer peaceful solutions to complex political problems. The Church seeks to identify with the struggle of a people which has lost control over its own destiny. We work for the development of a free state where people can worship freely, in their own language, and provide a secure future for their families. With the Lord's guidance, this Church will continue to be a light in the world, a leaven which can add to the "wholeness" of our people. We ask for your prayers and support as we face the future.

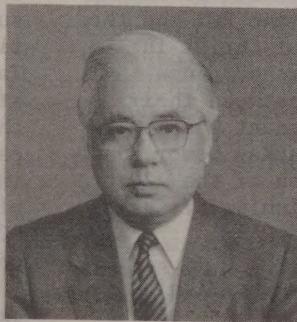
SHOJI TSUTOMU ENDS SERVICE AT NCCJ

With the 29th General Assembly of the NCCJ, Rev. SHOJI Tsutomu completed seven years of service as the General Secretary of the NCCJ. During this period, Rev. Shoji showed outstanding leadership on many issues and took special interest on questions of human rights in Japan and in Asia. He will be sincerely missed by his many friends and colleagues in Japan and in the worldwide ecumenical fellowship--the Oikoumene.

Many wish him well in his new position as professor of Greek, New Testament and missiology at Tokyo's Seminary for Rural Mission. [*Noson Dendo Shin-gakko*]

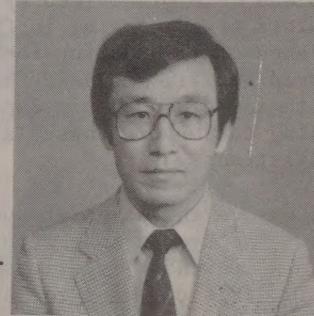
NEW FACES AT THE NCCJ

With the 29th General Assembly, a new slate of executive officers began their term at the NCCJ.



Rev. SATO Kunihiro was elected as the new chairperson of the NCCJ. Recently elected President of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, he is pastor of Ichigaya Lutheran Church (Tokyo).

Rev. MAEJIMA Munesoshi was appointed new General Secretary. A graduate of Kansaigakuin Theological Seminary, he has served 19 years as a pastor in an Osaka Kyodan church. In Osaka, he was heavily involved in the work of the Urban-Industrial Mission (URM). His concern for social justice--the situation of Korean residents in Japan and human rights in Asia--are two such issues--have been very much a part of his ministry.



Ms. ISSHIKI Yoshiko, of the Kyodan, and Rev. TAKEDA Makoto of the Japan Episcopal Church, were elected as vice-chairpersons. Ms. Isshiki serves on several Kyodan committees, while Rev. Takeda is Dean of the Episcopal Central Theological Seminary. Rev. KIM Kun Shik, General Secretary of the Korean Church in Japan, was elected secretary.



Newly elected NCCJ Officers
(left to right)

Rev. TAKEDA Makoto, vice-chairperson
Rev. SATO Kunihiro, chairperson
Ms. ISSHIKI Yoshiko, vice-chairperson
Rev. KIM Kun Shik, secretary

photo courtesy of Christo Shimbun

KYODAN SIGNS COVENANT WITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN TAIWAN

On April 11, 1985, at the 32nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT), the Moderators and General Secretaries of the PCT and the Kyodan (United Church of Christ in Japan) formally established a new covenant relationship between their two churches. The Covenant was signed in the Taipei MacKay Memorial Hospital on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the beginning of Christian mission in Taiwan.

Speaking at the time of the signing, Kyodan Moderator USHIROKU Toshio stated: "When the mountain people of Taiwan were prohibited by the Japanese rulers from engaging in Christian evangelization during the years of World War II, Japanese Christians, both in Taiwan and in Japan, did nothing to support those Taiwanese Christians."

It was on the basis of such contrition that the Kyodan sought to enter into a new covenant relationship with the PCT. This covenant replaced the "mission covenant" signed by the two churches in 1963. The 1963 covenant expressed ways in which the churches could exchange personnel without any reflection on past history.

The need to revise that covenant had been felt by both churches in recent years, as their relationship had changed substantially in the past 20 years. As Kyodan and PCT representatives worked to revise it, they felt that a new covenant should include references to past history. Thus the new covenant's preface acknowledges the past and ends with a quotation from I Cor. 12: *If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share in its happiness.*

Of the four articles of the covenant, the first characterizes the tone of the document. It declares that the two churches are members of the same body of Christ, sharing each other's

joy and suffering.

Rev. TAN Phok Seng, the newly-elected moderator of the PCT, spoke in response to Rev. Ushiroku's speech. Rev. Tan expressed his church's appreciation that such a covenant was being signed at a time of anxiety regarding the future of Taiwan and the PCT. Moderator Tan stated that at a time when many overseas churches are showing keen interest in establishing relations with the church in mainland China, at the cost, perhaps, of neglecting their relations with the PCT, the Kyodan action regarding the new covenant was most encouraging.

The signing of the covenant was witnessed by more than six hundred participants to the PCT General Assembly and some 20 pastors and lay persons from the Kyodan. The Kyodan representatives, who were warmly welcomed by their Taiwanese sisters and brothers, formed the first official visitation team from the Kyodan to the PCT.

--taken from report written by Rev. J. NAKAJIMA, Kyodan General Secretary

ASIA SUNDAY -- MAY 19, 1985 JESUS CHRIST SETS FREE TO SERVE

Every year Asian Churches observe the Sunday before Pentecost as *Asia Sunday*. On that day in 1959, the *East Asia Christian Conference (EACC)* was inaugurated. Since 1973, it has been known as the *CCA--Christian Conference of Asia*. Today, it is an ecumenical fellowship of 110 churches and National Councils from 16 Asian countries, including Australia and New Zealand. Together, they attempt to put into practice the belief that as Christians they are called to "*life together in common obedience to Him for the doing of His will in the world.*"

The theme for Asia Sunday '85 is "Jesus Christ Sets Free to Serve"--the same theme as the 8th Assembly of the CCA due to be held in Seoul, June 26 to July 2. Christians around the world are called to pray not only for the peoples of Asia, but also to support with their prayers the upcoming Seoul Assembly and the CCA.

KOREAN CHRISTIANS RALLY VS. JAPAN'S ALIEN REGISTRATION LAW



On Sunday March 24, over 1000 members of the Korean Christian Churches in the Kansai area gathered in the Hale Chapel of the Osaka Girls' School for a rally and demonstration calling for the basic revision of the Alien Registration Law. They called especially for the complete abolition of the most discriminatory parts of the Law, the requirements to be periodically fingerprinted and to carry on one's person at all times the prescribed identification. They called on the government of Japan to change the registration policies for legally resident foreign residents to make them comparable to the simple Residence Registration form for Japanese.

Organizers of the rally were represented by Rev. KIM Hyung Shik (Osaka) of the Kansai Rally Committee and Rev. KIM Duk Sam (Nishinomiya), Chairman of the Korean Church in Japan's National Committee on Fingerprinting Refusal. Following worship and prayers, they reported on recent developments in the Alien Registration Law struggle. Resistance to the worst parts of the law is growing with over 170 persons presently refusing to be fingerprinted. More than 30 of these are members of the KCCJ (Korean Christian Church in Japan). Four more Korean Christian refusals followed a similar rally in Kyushu on March 21. The number of church members stating

their intention to refuse grew to over 1100 following a national rally held in Tokyo January 15.

At the rally, appeals were made by those already refusing, and by those intending to take this step of civil disobedience. Messages of support were brought by representatives of the Japanese Kyodan Church, the Kansai Christian Coalition on Alien Registration Law Problems, and North American churches.

The demonstration was led by young Koreans drumming out their colourful farmers' resistance dances. Dressed

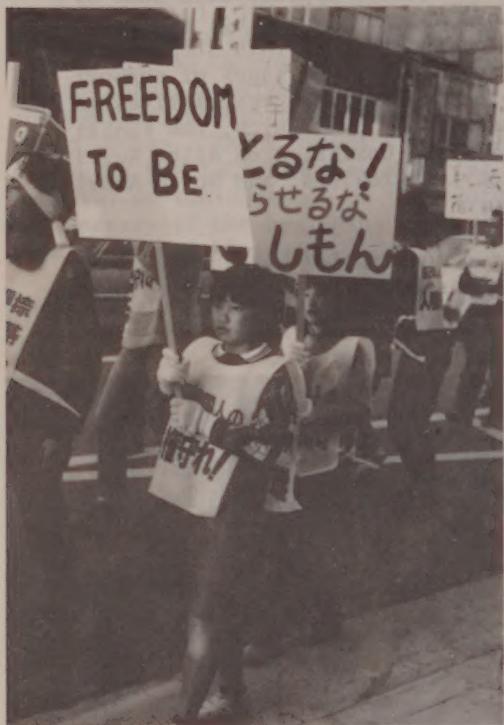


as a devil, a figure representing the Alien Registration Law pestered the parade throughout. The demonstration proceeded past the offices of the Metropolitan Police, the Immigration Department and the municipal government. Participants called for abolition of discrimination, for an end to punitive measures by the government against refusals and those intending to refuse, and for an end to police action against their families and local officials. Rally calls were interspersed with songs, creating a family atmosphere throughout the afternoon.

On the same day in Tokyo, the National Residents Association of Koreans (R.O.K.) in Japan elected Mr. PARK Byung Heun as their new president. One of his campaign pledges was to work for the total

(continued on next page)

abolition of the fingerprinting requirement, indicating that he and his family will resist the law themselves by refusing.



KOREAN RESIDENT BARRED FROM TEACHING

After teaching five years on a temporary basis at the elementary school level, Ms. YANG hong Ja successfully completed the Nagano prefectural test for Public school teachers. Shortly afterwards, the Ministry of Education informed the Nagano Prefectural Education Committee that only Japanese nationals were to be employed in the public school system. A representative from the Nagano school where Ms. Yang was teaching went twice to the office of the Ministry of Education to plead Ms. Yang's case. However, the Ministry rejected the school's decision to employ Ms. Yang as a teacher, stolidly maintaining that public school teachers must be of Japanese citizenship.

The Nagano Prefectural Education Committee then appointed Yang as a

"visiting lecturer" rather than a full-time teacher on the basis of the Ministry of Education's attitude. The Ministry backed up its stand by stating that non-Japanese would not be able to understand distinctly Japanese traditions, such as sentiments towards the Emperor, the national flag or even cherry blossoms. The Ministry stated that in order to nurture the Japanese spirit, it is desirable that children be taught by Japanese who pledge loyalty to Japan.

The Ministry of Education guidelines state that only Japanese citizens are able to take the employment test for public school teacher certification. Presently, however, there are 15 prefectures, including Tokyo and Osaka, that are not following this guideline. Over 80% of the foreign population in Japan is living in the 15 prefectures mentioned above, which include the major urban centres of Tokyo and Osaka.

Over 30 people holding Korean or Chinese citizenship are presently teaching at public schools in Japan under their own names. [i.e. not Japanese forms of their names] Professor TANAKA Hiroshi of Aichi Prefectural University states that "there is no law that limits public schools to hiring only Japanese nationals. A teacher's certificate can be issued to non-Japanese. Many private schools have employed non-Japanese staff as teachers. I believe that it is a serious contradiction of the philosophy of education if foreign teachers cannot be employed at public schools if they are already engaged as teachers in private schools."

It is obvious that the internationalization of education in Japan still has a very long ways to go.

[Translated from the *Asahi Shimbun*, April 8, 1985.]

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Editorial staff: Aiko Carter
Patti Talbot